

a veteran in the civil rights struggle, now serving his Congress with great distinction in the House of Representatives.

I would like to ask the military aide to read the citations.

[At this point, Lt. Comdr. Wesley Huey, USN, Naval Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the awards.]

I'd like to ask the members of the Roosevelt family who are here to stand. [Applause] Thank you.

The day the U.N. delegates voted to approve the declaration, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, "Long job over." [Laughter] One of the few mistakes she ever made. [Laughter] She left us and all our successors a big job that will never be over, for the Universal Declaration contains an eternal promise, one embraced by our Founders in 1776, one that has to be reaffirmed every day in every way.

In our country, each generation of Americans has had to do it: in the struggle against slavery led by President Lincoln, in FDR's Four Freedoms, in the unfinished work of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, in the ongoing work here in this room.

I have learned in ways large and small in the last 6 years that there is within every person a scale of justice and that people can too easily be herded into hatred and extremism, often out of a belief that they have absolute truth and, therefore, are entitled to absolute power, that they can ignore any constitution, any laws, override any facts. There will always be work to be done. And again, I would say to you that this award we gave to these four richly deserving people is also for all of you who labor for human rights.

In the prolog of John Lewis's magnificent autobiography, "Walking With the Wind," he tells a stunning story that has become a metaphor for his life and is a metaphor for your work, about being a little boy with his brothers and sisters and cousins in the house of a relative, that was a very fragile house, when an enormous wind came up. And he said he was told that all the children had to hold hands, and one corner of the house would blow up in the wind and all the children would walk, holding hands, to the corner, and it would go down. And then another would

come up, and all the children would hold hands again and go to the other corner until the house came down. And by walking with the wind, hand-in-hand, they saved the house and the family and the children.

John says that that walk is a struggle to find the beloved community. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights applies to individuals, but it can only be achieved by our common community.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:39 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble and Social Democratic Party leader John Hume of Northern Ireland.

## **Proclamation 7158—Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, 1998**

*December 10, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Thanks to the foresight of our Founding Fathers and their commitment to human rights, we live in a Nation founded upon the principles of equality, justice, and freedom—principles guaranteed to us by our Constitution. With the memory of tyranny fresh in their minds, the members of the First Congress of the United States proposed constitutional amendments known as the Bill of Rights, making explicit and forever protecting our Nation's cherished freedoms of religion, speech, press, and assembly.

But human rights have never been solely a domestic concern. Americans have always sought to share these rights with oppressed people around the world. In his annual message to the Congress, on January 6, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt articulated this desire: "In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want . . .

The fourth is freedom from fear . . . anywhere in the world . . . The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.”

Fifty years ago, on December 10, 1948, the world reached a major milestone toward FDR’s vision when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration—drafted by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt—established an international standard that recognized the “inherent dignity” and the “equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family . . .” It denounced past “disregard and contempt for human rights [that] have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind . . .”

Today, a majority of the world’s people live in democracies and exercise their right to freely choose their own governments. International war crimes tribunals seek justice for victims and their families by working to ensure that war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide do not go unpunished. And we are heartened by the progress toward peace made in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, and elsewhere, which advances the cause of human rights. But there are still many areas where human rights abuses are committed with impunity—unchecked and unpunished.

To reaffirm our Nation’s unequivocal commitment to upholding human rights, today I am issuing an Executive order to create an interagency working group to help enforce the human rights treaties we have already ratified and to make recommendations on treaties we have yet to ratify. In addition, my Administration is working to establish a genocide early warning center and to fund non-governmental organizations that respond rapidly in human rights emergencies. The Department of State is working to provide additional assistance for Afghan women and girls under the oppressive rule of the Taliban. We are also supporting the work of the International Labor Organization in its efforts to eliminate child labor. Finally, the Immigration and Naturalization Service is issuing guidelines on how to handle cases where children seek asylum in the United States.

This year, as we come together to celebrate the Declaration’s 50th anniversary, let us not forget the driving force behind its creation. We are grateful that Eleanor Roosevelt brought her prodigious energies and talents to this task. And it is fitting that we have established the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights, honoring others for their important contributions to protecting human rights around the world.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said that “the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Her accomplishments serve as an inspiration to us all, and each of us can play a part in preserving and promoting her enduring legacy. Let us each embrace the Declaration’s promise by striving to uphold its principles and defending the rights it embodies.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 10, 1998, as Human Rights Day; December 15, 1998, as Bill of Rights Day; and the week beginning December 10, 1998, as Human Rights Week. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate these observances with appropriate activities, ceremonies, and programs that demonstrate our national commitment to the Bill of Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the promotion and protection of human rights for all people.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 14, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 15.

**Executive Order 13107—  
Implementation of Human  
Rights Treaties**  
*December 10, 1998*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and bearing in mind the obligations of the United States pursuant to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and other relevant treaties concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights to which the United States is now or may become a party in the future, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Implementation of Human Rights Obligations.** (a) It shall be the policy and practice of the Government of the United States, being committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, fully to respect and implement its obligations under the international human rights treaties to which it is a party, including the ICCPR, the CAT, and the CERD.

(b) It shall also be the policy and practice of the Government of the United States to promote respect for international human rights, both in our relationships with all other countries and by working with and strengthening the various international mechanisms for the promotion of human rights, including, *inter alia*, those of the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, and the Organization of American States.

**Sec. 2. Responsibility of Executive Departments and Agencies.** (a) All executive departments and agencies (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 101–105, including boards and commissions, and hereinafter referred to collectively as “agency” or “agencies”) shall maintain a current awareness of United States international human rights obligations that are relevant to their functions and shall perform such functions so as to respect and implement those obligations fully. The head of each agency shall designate a single contact officer who will be responsible for overall coordination

of the implementation of this order. Under this order, all such agencies shall retain their established institutional roles in the implementation, interpretation, and enforcement of Federal law and policy.

(b) The heads of agencies shall have lead responsibility in coordination with other appropriate agencies, for questions concerning implementation of human rights obligations that fall within their respective operating and program responsibilities and authorities or, to the extent that matters do not fall within the operating and program responsibilities and authorities of any agency, that most closely relate to their general areas of concern.

**Sec. 3. Human Rights Inquiries and Complaints.** Each agency shall take lead responsibility in coordination with other appropriate agencies, for responding to inquiries, requests for information, and complaints about violations of human rights obligations that fall within its areas of responsibility or, if the matter does not fall within its areas of responsibility, referring it to the appropriate agency for response.

**Sec. 4. Interagency Working Group on Human Rights Treaties.** (a) There is hereby established an Interagency Working Group on Human Rights Treaties for the purpose of providing guidance, oversight, and coordination with respect to questions concerning the adherence to and implementation of human rights obligations and related matters.

(b) The designee of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs shall chair the Interagency Working Group, which shall consist of appropriate policy and legal representatives at the Assistant Secretary level from the Department of State, the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other agencies as the chair deems appropriate. The principal members may designate alternates to attend meetings in their stead.

(c) The principal functions of the Interagency Working Group shall include:

(i) coordinating the interagency review of any significant issues concerning the implementation of this order and analysis and recommendations in connection with pursuing